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SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

June 16, 2004

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 1992 - ROUTINE)
TAGS: PINS, PREL, PTER, PGOV
Captions: None
Subject: SCENESETTER FOR CENTCOM COMMANDER, GEN ABIZAID, JUNE 2004
Ref: None

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 01992

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: USLO
INFO: DAO DCM POL AMB

DISSEMINATION: USLO
CHARGE: USLO

APPROVED: AMB: WAHBA
DRAFTED: USLO: MSCHWAN
CLEARED: POL:JMAYBUR,DAO:BKERINS,DCM:RALBRIGHT,USLO:MSCHWAN

VZCZCADI317
RR RUCAACC RUEKJCS RUEASRT RHMFISS RHRMDAB RUEWMFU
RUEAHQA RUEKJCS RHEFDIA RUEHC RUEKJCS RUENAAA RUCAACC RUCAACC
RUEKJCS RUEAHQA RULSSAK RUEWMFU
DE RUEHAD #1992/01 1681236
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 161236Z JUN 04
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUCAACC/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP/ISA/NESA//
RUEASRT/COMUSARCENT FT MCPHERSON GA
RHMFISS/COMUSCENTAF SHAW AFB SC
RHRMDAB/COMUSNAVCENT
RUEWMFU/HQ DA WASH DC
RUEAHQA/HQ USAF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASH DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4756
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASH DC
RUENAAA/CNO WASHDC
RUCAACC/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ1/CCJ2//
RUCAACC/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ3/CCJ4/CCJ5//
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-5//
RUEAHQA/OSAF WASHDC//IA//
RULSSAK/NAVY IPO WASHINGTON DC
RUEWMFU/HQ DA WASH DC//DALO-SA//

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 09 ABU DHABI 001992

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/15/14
TAGS: [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR CENTCOM COMMANDER, GEN ABIZAID,
JUNE 2004

WELCOME

11. (U) GENERAL ABIZAID: WELCOME BACK TO THE UAE. WE HAVE REQUESTED MEETINGS FOR YOU WITH ABU DHABI CROWN PRINCE SHAYKH KHALIFA BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN, AS WELL AS WITH ABU DHABI DEPUTY CROWN PRINCE AND UAE ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF LT GEN SHAYKH MUHAMMAD BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN (MBZ). BOTH SHAYKHS WILL BE INTERESTED TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN.

BACKGROUND

12. (S) UAE SUPPORT FOR THE U.S. IN THE REGION REMAINS SOLID. THE EMIRATI LEADERSHIP HAS TRIED IN EARNEST TO ACCOMMODATE EVERY U.S. REQUEST FOR COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE. THIS ENTAILS SOME POLITICAL RISK AS THE LEADERSHIP QUIETLY ALLOWS U.S. KC-10 AND KC-135 TANKERS, U-2 RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT, GLOBAL HAWK UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLES, AND (UP UNTIL RECENTLY) C-130 SUPPLY AIRCRAFT TO CONDUCT OIF/OEF/HOA SUPPORT OPERATIONS FROM BASES WITHIN THE UAE. ADDITIONALLY, THE EMIRATIS HAVE GRANTED OVER 60,000 AIRCRAFT OVERFLIGHT AND LANDING CLEARANCES ANNUALLY SINCE OEF BEGAN. FURTHER, THE PORTS OF JEBEL ALI AND FUJEIRAH ARE INDISPENSABLE TO U.S. NAVY MARITIME INTERDICTION OPERATIONS, RESUPPLY AND SUSTAINMENT, AND COMBAT SUPPORT EFFORTS ACROSS THE REGION. UAE SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN COMBAT OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN, AND UAE INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS ARE DEPLOYED TO BAGHDAD AND BAGRAM. DESPITE SOME RECENT SETBACKS IN MAJOR FOREIGN MILITARY SALES OFFERS (MOST NOTABLY THE EMIRATI REJECTION OF FIVE RE-FURBISHED E-2C AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING AIRCRAFT IN APRIL 2004), OUR MILITARY TO MILITARY RELATIONSHIP IS VITAL AND REMAINS STRONG.

SUGGESTED THEMES

13. (C) WE ARE WORKING TO ARRANGE MEETINGS FOR YOU WITH BOTH THE CROWN PRINCE OF ABU DHABI, SHAYKH KHALIFA BIN ZAYED, AND THE DEPUTY CROWN PRINCE OF ABU DHABI AND CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE UAE ARMED FORCES, SHAYKH MOHAMED BIN ZAYED. IN YOUR MEETINGS WITH THE CROWN PRINCE AND SHAYKH MOHAMED, WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU THANK THE UAE FOR ITS STRONG AND CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR OEF AND OIF, AND POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS TO SUPPORT STABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ. THE CROWN PRINCE WILL BE MOST INTERESTED IN HEARING YOUR ASSESSMENT OF:

-- THE COMING TRANSITION PERIOD IN IRAQ, INCLUDING THE ROLES OF THE COALITION FORCES AND THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT;

-- OUR TRAINING OF THE IRAQI MILITARY AND POLICE, AND YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THEIR ABILITIES TO ASSUME GREATER RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SECURITY;

-- STRATEGIES FOR FALLUJAH AND FOR DEALING WITH MOQTADA AL-SADR;

-- PROGRESS ON RESTORING STABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN;

-- THE SITUATION IN SAUDI ARABIA.

14. (S) WITH SHAYKH MOHAMED, WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU EXPLORE IN GREATER DETAIL THE ISSUES MENTIONED ABOVE, AS WELL AS RAISE THE FOLLOWING ISSUES:

-- ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE IRAQI INTERIM GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE EXPECTED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NEW U.S. EMBASSY AND THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT, AND COALITION FORCES;

-- ARRANGEMENTS FOR BROADER PARTICIPATION IN THE

MULTINATIONAL FORCE;

-- ASK MBZ FOR HIS VIEWS ON IRAQI RECEPTIVENESS TO ARAB TROOPS (NOTE: SHAYKH MOHAMED TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT ARAB TROOPS WOULD ONLY GO TO IRAQ IF BLESSED BY THE ARAB LEAGUE. END NOTE.)

-- ASSURE MBZ OF U.S. COMMITMENT TO SAUDI ARABIA. (MBZ AND OTHER SENIOR EMIRATIS HAVE CAUTIONED THAT OUR SUPPORT AT THIS TIME IS CRUCIAL FOR THE SAUDIS BUT NEEDS TO BE SUBTLE AND BALANCED.)

TERRORISM FINANCING

15. (C) THE UAEG HAS CRACKED DOWN ON POTENTIAL VULNERABILITIES IN THE FINANCIAL MARKETS SINCE 9/11, AND IMPLEMENTED LEGISLATION IN JANUARY 2002 CRIMINALIZING MONEY LAUNDERING AND TERRORIST FINANCING. IT IS IN THE PROCESS OF CONSIDERING A SEPARATE TERRORIST FINANCE LAW TO ADDRESS SOME OF THE PROBLEMS THE CENTRAL BANK HAS HAD WITH INVESTIGATING TERRORIST FINANCING AND FREEZING THE ACCOUNTS OF TERRORISTS. AS OF THE END OF 2003, THE UAEG HAS FROZEN MORE THAN 3.13 MILLION DOLLARS IN 18 BANK ACCOUNTS IN THE UAE, AND HAS WORKED WITH US TO BLOCK FINANCING A NUMBER OF NAMED TERRORIST ENTITIES. THE CENTRAL BANK ALSO HOSTED A CONFERENCE ON THE HAWALA INFORMAL MONEY TRANSFER SYSTEM IN APRIL. THE UAE RECOGNIZES THE NEED TO PROTECT ITS FINANCIAL SYSTEM FROM USE BY TERRORISTS. A TERRORIST ATTACK HERE WOULD NEGATE THE LEADERSHIP'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE THE UAE, AND DUBAI IN PARTICULAR, AS A TOURIST DESTINATION AND HAVEN FOR FOREIGN INVESTMENT.

MEDIA CONCERNS

16. (U) AL ARABIYYA, THE DUBAI-BASED ARABIC SATELLITE NEWS STATION COMPETING WITH AL JAZEERA FOR VIEWERS, STIRRED UP CONTROVERSY WITH SENSATIONALISTIC BROADCASTS OF COALITION OPERATIONS.

1A. (U) WE HAVE EXPRESSED STRONG OBJECTIONS TO BOTH THE UAE GOVERNMENT AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE DUBAI MEDIA CITY, REGARDING AL ARABIYYA'S LACK OF OBJECTIVITY. AL ARABIYYA AND NUMEROUS MEDIA GIANTS, SUCH AS CNN AND REUTERS, OPERATE FROM DUBAI MEDIA CITY BECAUSE THE UAEG AND DUBAI ALLOW THEM TO BROADCAST WITHOUT CENSORSHIP. AL ARABIYYA IS OWNED BY WEALTHY SAUDI BUSINESSMAN WALEED BIN IBRAHIM AL IBRAHIM, A BROTHER-IN-LAW OF KING FAHD, AND A PRINCIPAL SHAREHOLDER OF MIDDLE EAST BROADCASTING CORPORATION (MBC), AL ARABIYYA'S PARENT COMPANY. OTHER AL ARABIYYA INVESTORS REPORTEDLY INCLUDE KUWAITI BUSINESSMEN AND A KUWAITI ROYAL FAMILY MEMBER, AHMED AL FAHED AL SABAH.

1B. (C) THE UAE LEADERSHIP TELLS US THEY ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO SHUT DOWN THE STATION OR CANCEL RESIDENCY VISA PERMITS WITHOUT DESTROYING DUBAI'S FREE-ZONE REPUTATION. BUT SHAYKH MOHAMMED AND OTHER UAE LEADERS HAVE REPEATEDLY STRESSED THEIR CONCERN ABOUT THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF BOTH AL ARABIYYA AND AL-JAZIRA. THE EMIRATIS HAVE WORKED BEHIND THE SCENES TO ENSURE THAT AL ARABIYYA STATION'S NEW MANAGEMENT IMPROVES REPORTING STANDARDS AND OBJECTIVITY. UAE LEADERS ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT THE STATION WILL SOON EXERCISE MORE PROFESSIONAL AND OBJECTIVE STANDARDS.

DUBAI AND COUNTER-PROLIFERATION

17. (S) DURING A MARCH VISIT TO THE UAE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN WOLF URGED UAE LEADERS TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTING A.Q. KHAN'S PROLIFERATION NETWORK IN DUBAI. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS SHAYKH HAMDAN BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN PLEDGED COMPLETE COOPERATION TO SHUTDOWN THE KHAN NETWORK, AND DUBAI CROWN PRINCE AND UAE MINISTER OF DEFENSE SHAYKH MOHAMMED BIN RASHID AL MAKTOUM (MBR) UNDERTOOK TO FULFILL A NUMBER OF OUR OUTSTANDING REQUESTS

IMMEDIATELY, NAMELY APPREHENDING B.S.A. TAHIR'S BROTHER WHO WAS RESIDENT IN DUBAI, AND MAKING HIM AVAILABLE TO U.S. INVESTIGATORS FOR QUESTIONING; AS WELL AS CLOSING DOWN SMB COMPUTERS AND TURNING OVER COMPUTER EQUIPMENT AND OTHER ASSETS (E.G., FILES) TO USG AUTHORITIES FOR INVESTIGATION. UAE AUTHORITIES CONTINUE TO WORK WITH U.S. INVESTIGATORS TO DISCERN THE FULL SCOPE OF KHAN'S ACTIVITIES IN THE UAE. A/S WOLF'S TRIP FOLLOWED THE SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF THE STATE/NP-LED EXPORT CONTROLS AND RELATED BORDER SECURITY ASSISTANCE (EXBS) PROGRAM IN THE UAE. THE USG AND THE UAEG HAVE AGREED ON A ROBUST EXPORT CONTROL TRAINING PLAN, WHICH WE BEGAN TO IMPLEMENT IN DECEMBER 2003. SINCE THAT TIME, THE USG HAS PROVIDED FOUR COURSES TO THE UAEG ON BOTH LEGAL ASPECTS OF AN EXPORT CONTROL PROGRAM AND ON HOW TO DETECT AND INTERDICT THE COMPONENTS OF WMD. THE UAE IS IN THE PROCESS OF DRAFTING ITS OWN EXPORT CONTROL LAW.

PROLIFERATION SECURITY INITIATIVE (PSI)

18. (U) SENIOR UAE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN HOW THE UAE COULD PLAY A ROLE IN PSI. MBZ TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT THE UAE IS INTERESTED (IN PRINCIPLE) IN A SHIP BOARDING AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S. UAE ARMED FORCES GHQ IS CURRENTLY REVIEWING A DRAFT AGREEMENT AND WE EXPECT TO OPEN DISCUSSIONS ON PSI WITH THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF'S OFFICE SOON.

NARCOTICS IN THE UAE

19. (U) ALTHOUGH NOT A NARCOTICS PRODUCING NATION, THE UAE IS A TRANSSHIPMENT POINT FOR TRAFFICKERS MOVING ILLEGAL DRUGS WESTWARD FROM THE MAJOR DRUG-PRODUCING COUNTRIES, INCLUDING AFGHANISTAN, IRAN, PAKISTAN, AND INDIA. FREQUENT REPORTS OF SEIZURES OF ILLEGAL DRUGS IN THE UAE DURING THE PAST YEAR UNDERSCORE THIS CONCLUSION, ALTHOUGH MOST SEIZURES HAVE BEEN OF "SOFT" DRUGS LIKE HASHISH, NOT "HARD" DRUGS LIKE HEROIN. NEWS STORIES ABOUT DRUG SMUGGLING, DEALING, AND USAGE WERE REPORTED IN THE LOCAL PRESS IN 2003. IN ADDITION TO THE COUNTRY'S GENERALLY LAISSEZ-FAIRE ATTITUDE TOWARD COMMERCIAL TRADE--THOUGH CERTAINLY NOT DRUGS--THERE ARE SEVERAL FACTORS THAT PROMOTE UAE'S ROLE AS A WAY-STATION, INCLUDING ITS PROXIMITY TO MAJOR DRUG CULTIVATION REGIONS IN SOUTH ASIA; 700 KILOMETERS OF OPEN COASTLINE; AND RELATIVE AFFLUENCE AMONG THE LOCAL POPULATION. PUBLISHED STATISTICS ON NARCOTICS SEIZURES AND DOMESTIC ADDICTION REVEAL A GROWING DRUG PROBLEM AMONG UAE AND THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS WHICH, WHILE NOT SIGNIFICANT BY AMERICAN STANDARDS, IS NOTABLE GIVEN THE COUNTRY'S HARSH DRUG LAWS. A MINISTRY OF HEALTH REPORT IN LATE 1998 ASSERTS THAT THERE WERE APPROXIMATELY 12,500 DRUG ADDICTS IN THE COUNTRY OF 3.1 MILLION PEOPLE.

REGIONAL AID AND SUPPORT

110. (U) IRAQ: SENIOR UAEG OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY SUPPORTIVE OF OUR BROADER REGIONAL OBJECTIVES IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN. UAE ASSISTANCE TO IRAQ, BOTH PLEDGED AND DELIVERED, HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT. AS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE CORE GROUP ON IRAQ'S RECONSTRUCTION, THE UAEG PROVIDED SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR IRAQ'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND HOSTED A FOLLOW-ON DONORS CONFERENCE IN FEBRUARY 2004. DURING FORMER SECRETARY BAKER'S VISIT TO THE UAEG IN JANUARY 2004, ABU DHABI CROWN PRINCE SHAYKH KHALIFA AGREED TO FORGIVE THE BULK OF IRAQ'S \$4 BILLION DEBT TO THE UAE.

111. (U) AFGHANISTAN: THE UAE HAS PROVIDED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN FINANCIAL AID AND ASSISTANCE-IN-KIND TO THE AFGHAN INTERIM AUTHORITY, AND REMAINS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN RECONSTRUCTION AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE. THE UAEG PLEDGED \$30 MILLION IN ECONOMIC AID AND A FURTHER \$6 MILLION IN HUMANITARIAN AID AT THE JANUARY 2002 TOKYO CONFERENCE, AND WE EXPECT THE UAE AID PACKAGE TO EXCEED THE

\$150 MILLION UAE HAS ALREADY SPENT.

IRAN: TENSION PERSISTS

¶12. (S) RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UAE AND IRAN REMAIN STRAINED. THE EFFORT TO REACH SOME COMPROMISE ON THE ABU MUSA ISLAND ISSUE CAME TO A NEAR HALT IN LATE SPRING/EARLY SUMMER OF ¶2003. THE EMIRATIS HAVE MADE CLEAR TO US THAT THEY ARE DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS OF IRAN'S TERRITORIAL/MILITARY AMBITIONS IN THE GULF, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO TEHRAN'S NUCLEAR AND WMD ACQUISITION POLICY AND HAVE CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED A TOUGH APPROACH BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND IAEA. TO ADD TO THE TENSIONS BETWEEN THE UAE AND IRAN, IT HAS BEEN REPORTED TO US THAT OVER TWO MONTHS AGO, TWO UAE COAST GUARD PATROL SHIPS AND CREW WERE BEING DETAINED IN BANDER ABBAS. THE REASONS FOR THIS ARE UNCLEAR AND THE EMIRATIES HAVE REMAINED QUIET ABOUT IT. LIKEWISE, EARLY JUNE HAS WITNESSED AN UPSURGE IN DETENTION OF FISHING VESSELS FOR OPERATING TOO CLOSE TO OIL WELLS IN THE GREATER ABU MUSA AREA WHICH BOTH SIDES CLAIM. THE EMIRATIS ARE WORRIED ABOUT IRANIAN DESIGNS IN IRAQ AND HAVE URGED US TO HELP PREVENT IRAN FROM MEDDLING IN IRAQ'S DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. THE EMIRATIS BELIEVE THAT THE IRANIS ARE ACTIVELY SEEKING A FOOTHOLD IN THE SUNNI IRAQ COMMUNITY AS WELL AS WITH THE SHI'A.

THE MILITARY RELATIONSHIP

¶13. (U) OUR MILITARY-TO-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH UAE IS ACTIVE AND STRONG. UNTIL RECENTLY, OUR KEY INTERLOCUTOR WITH THE UAE MILITARY HAD BEEN UAE ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF LIEUTENANT GENERAL SHAYKH MOHAMMED BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN (MBZ). FOLLOWING HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE ROLE OF ABU DHABI DEPUTY CROWN PRINCE, MBZ HAS BEEN LESS INVOLVED IN DAILY MILITARY ISSUES, AS HIS NEW DUTIES HAVE DEMANDED MORE AND MORE OF HIS ATTENTION. INSTEAD, MBZ HAS DEFERRED MOST MILITARY MATTERS TO HIS CAPABLE AND INTELLIGENT DEPUTY, MAJOR GENERAL HAMAD MOHAMMED THANI AL RUMAITHY. THIS IS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT, IN THAT THE US-UAE MILITARY-TO-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP HAS NOW BEEN INSTITUTIONALIZED WITH GHQ, AND IS NO LONGER RELIANT UPON THE PERSONAL AVAILABILITY AND DIRECT INVOLVEMENT OF MBZ. MAJOR GENERAL HAMAD THANI IS A KEEN ORGANIZER AND HAS EFFECTIVELY ENERGIZED HIS STAFF TO BEGIN COORDINATING THE MYRIAD ISSUES OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP.

¶14. (U) UNFORTUNATELY, THE INAUGURAL JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION (JMC), SCHEDULED FOR MAY 2004, WAS POSTPONED AT OSD REQUEST DUE TO A SCHEDULING CONFLICT WITH THE QATAR MILITARY COOPERATION COMMISSION (MCC). IN A SHORT-NOTICE ATTEMPT TO DECONFLICT THE TWO HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS FROM AN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY, WE WERE FORCED TO POSTPONE THE UAE JMC IN FAVOR OF THE PREVIOUSLY-CONFIRMED DATES FOR THE QATAR MCC. DESPITE OBVIOUS DISAPPOINTMENT AT UAE GHQ (FOLLOWING EARNEST PREPARATIONS FOR THE EVENT), DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF MAJOR GENERAL HAMAD THANI GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED OUR REQUEST TO POSTPONE THE JMC, AND SUGGESTED 11 - 12 OCT 2004 AS THE NEXT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE FORUM. WE ARE AWAITING OSD CONFIRMATION OF THOSE DATES.

¶15. (U) THE SUCCESS OF THE RECENT INAUGURAL CLASS OF THE GULF AIR WARFARE CENTER (GAWC) IS ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. USAF AND UAE AIR FORCE HAVE BEEN WORKING THE CONCEPT SINCE MAY 2000. UAE IS PROVIDING STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITIES AND THE U.S. (ALONG WITH THE U.K.) IS PROVIDING COURSEWARE AND DEDICATED INSTRUCTORS, AS WELL AS ROUTINE PARTICIPANTS. THE INAUGURAL CLASS CONCLUDED IN FEBRUARY 2004 AND SUCCESSFULLY VALIDATED THE INITIAL CONCEPT. THE SECOND CLASS GRADUATED ON 26 MAY 2004 AND IMPLEMENTED A SYLLABUS REFINED BY THE LESSONS OF THE INAUGURAL COURSE. FUTURE CLASSES WILL EXPAND GAWC PARTICIPATION TO OTHER GCC COUNTRIES AND FRANCE, AND THE UAE AIR FORCE COMMANDER IS CONSIDERING FURTHER EXPANSION TO POSSIBLY INCLUDE JORDAN AND EGYPT. MEANWHILE, CENTAF AND UAEAF ARE COORDINATING A DRAFT US-UAE MEMORANDUM OF

AGREEMENT DETAILING FUTURE GAWC COOPERATION.

¶16. (S) AL DHAFRA AIR BASE REMAINS A KEY COMPONENT OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH UAE AND IS VITAL TO THE ABILITY OF CENTCOM AND CENTAF TO PROJECT COMBAT POWER IN THE AOR. AL DHAFRA IS CURRENTLY THE HOME TO THE 380TH AIR EXPEDITIONARY WING, WITH MORE THAN 1100 CENTAF PERSONNEL, OPERATING TWELVE KC-135 AND FOUR KC-10 AIR REFUELING TANKERS, AS WELL AS SIX U-2 SURVEILLANCE AIRCRAFT AND ONE GLOBAL HAWK UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE. UAEAF HAS ACCOMMODATED VIRTUALLY EVERY REQUEST FOR PERIODIC INCREASES IN FORCES AT AL DHAFRA, AS MANDATED BY OUR FLUCTUATING OPERATIONS TEMPO. WE ARE PRESENTLY COORDINATING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SEPARATE, DEDICATED U.S. AIRCRAFT PARKING RAMP AND REFUELING HYDRANT SYSTEM. CONGRESS AUTHORIZED THIS MILCON PROJECT IN THE 2003 GWOT SUPPLEMENTAL. WE EXPECT TO OBLIGATE FUNDS AND BEGIN CONSTRUCTION THIS MONTH. ADDITIONALLY, UAEAF IS FUNDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW U.S. CANTONEMENT AREA WITH STATE OF THE ART DORMITORY FACILITIES. THE NEW CANTONEMENT AREA WAS DESIGNED TO U.S. SPECIFICATIONS AND WILL ALLAY NUMEROUS FORCE PROTECTION CONCERNS, AND WILL ALSO MOVE CENTAF PERSONNEL FROM THE EXISTING TENTS, INHABITED SINCE 1991.

¶17. (S) THE EMIRATI PORTS AT JEBEL ALI (ON THE ARABIAN GULF) AND FUJEIRAH (ON THE GULF OF OMAN) ARE ALSO CRUCIAL TO CENTCOM ACCESS AND FORCE PROJECTION IN THE REGION. OVER 620 U.S. NAVY SHIPS VISITED UAE PORTS LAST YEAR. U.S. NAVY SEALS RECENTLY COMPLETED TRAINING DUBAI POLICE AND JEBEL ALI PORT POLICE ON SPECIAL TACTICS AND SHIPBOARDING PROCEDURES, IN ORDER TO BETTER PROTECT US NAVAL SHIPS IN UAE PORTS.

¶18. (S) UAE DEPLOYED A 35-MAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS CONTINGENT TO BAGRAM AIR BASE IN MID-2003. THESE TROOPS ARE ENGAGED IN ACTIVE COMBAT OPERATIONS AND SUFFERED THEIR FIRST CASUALTIES (WIA, RETURNED TO DUTY) ON 24 APRIL 2004. UAE ALSO PLANS TO DEPLOY ITS SQUADRON OF SEEKER II UAVS TO BAGRAM BEGINNING IN LATE SUMMER 2004. ALTHOUGH THIS DEPLOYMENT WAS DELAYED FROM THE ORIGINAL PLAN (DECEMBER 2003), DUE TO ENVIRONMENTAL AND OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS AT BAGRAM, PREPARATIONS ARE ON-TRACK AND WE ARE WORKING THE DETAILS TO ENSURE SUCCESS.

¶19. (S) WE HAVE RECENTLY ENGAGED IN SEVERAL INTELLIGENCE SHARING INITIATIVES WITH UAE. MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, THE UAE DIRECTORATE OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SENT OFFICERS TO COALITION HEADQUARTERS IN BOTH BAGHDAD AND BAGRAM IN APRIL 2004 TO PERFORM DUTIES AS JOINT OPERATIONS AND JOINT INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS. U.S. INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES ARE ASSISTING THE UAE SPACE AND RECONNAISSANCE CENTER (SRC) TO CONSOLIDATE ITS MAPPING FUNCTIONS, AND THE NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY IS DEVELOPING AIR PHOTO INTERPRETATION FAMILIARIZATION TRAINING FOR THE UAE SRC. FURTHER, CENTCOM HAS OFFERED TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE TO THE UAE TO CREATE AN INTELLIGENCE FUSION CENTER THAT WILL GIVE THREAT INDICATIONS AND WARNINGS TO THE UAE LEADERSHIP. THE UAE IS EVALUATING WHETHER TO TAKE THE NEEDED STEPS TO CONCLUDE A BILATERAL SIGINT AGREEMENT.

¶20. (U) UAE CONCERN WITH LOGISTICS, SUPPLY, AND SUPPORT OF THEIR FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN HAVE LED TO RENEWED INTEREST IN AN ACQUISITION AND CROSS SERVICING AGREEMENT. THE DIRECT PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT OF BOTH MBZ AND UAE AIR FORCE COMMANDER STAFF PILOT MAJOR GENERAL KHALID ABDULLA MOBARAK AL BUAINAIN HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT, AND WE ARE MAKING PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETING AN AGREEMENT IN TALKS BETWEEN UAE GHQ, CENTCOM J4, AND USLO STAFF OFFICERS.

¶21. (U) EXERCISE EAGLE RESOLVE 04 (ER 04) WAS CONDUCTED 15 - 25 MAY 2004. THE EMIRATIS HOSTED CENTCOM'S ANNUAL COOPERATIVE DEFENSE INITIATIVE EVENT FOR THE FIRST TIME, FOLLOWING THE HIATUS LAST YEAR DUE TO OIF. THE THEME FOR ER 04 WAS THEATER AIR AND MISSILE DEFENSE. CENTCOM J3 AND SUPPORTING U.S. ORGANIZATIONS WERE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN DEVELOPING THE SCENARIO AND PROCEDURES FOR THE EXERCISE, AND PROVIDED THE PREPONDERANCE OF PARTICIPANTS AND

EXPERTISE. UAE PREPARATIONS WERE ENTHUSIASTIC, PROFESSIONAL, AND THOROUGH, AND UAE OFFICERS PERFORMED ADMIRABLY, ESPECIALLY IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS FOR THE AIR OPERATIONS CENTER AND REGIONAL OPERATIONS CENTR. KUWAIT, BAHRAIN, AND QATAR WERE WELL-REPRESENTED AND PARTICIPATED CAPABLY. OMAN PROVIDED TWO MID-LEVEL OFFICERS WHO STRUGGLED WITH THE BASIC CONCEPTS. SAUDI ARABIA DID NOT SHOW UP FOR THE COORDINATION EXERCISE PORTION OF ER 04, BUT ARRIVED FOR THE EXECUTIVE SEMINAR AND DEBRIEFS. EGYPT AND JORDAN BOTH PROVIDED OBSERVERS. THE EXERCISE WAS A SUCCESS AND PRODUCED SEVERAL VALUABLE LESSONS REGARDING OPERATIONAL-LEVEL INTEROPERABILITY AND COORDINATION. THERE ARE, AS OF YET, NO VOLUNTEERS TO HOST NEXT YEAR'S EXERCISE AND THE ISSUE WAS TABLED FOR FUTURE DISCUSSIONS.

CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

¶22. (U) WE HAVE EXPERIENCED A NUMBER OF RECENT SETBACKS IN OUR MIL-TO-MIL RELATIONSHIP, MOST NOTABLY IN THE ARENA OF MAJOR WEAPONS SYSTEM SALES.

¶23. (U) UAE ALLOWED THE OFFER EXPIRATION DATE (OED) ON THE LETTER OF OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE (LOA) FOR FIVE E-2C ADVANCED HAWKEYE AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING AIRCRAFT TO EXPIRE WITHOUT FORMAL NOTIFICATION ON 31 MARCH 2004. A SUBSEQUENT 15-DAY GRACE PERIOD ALSO LAPSED WITHOUT FORMAL UAE COMMENT. THIS FOREIGN MILITARY SALES (FMS) CASE HAD BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR SEVERAL YEARS, AND THE OED WAS REPEATEDLY EXTENDED OVER THE COURSE OF CHALLENGING NEGOTIATIONS. FOLLOWING OED, THE FIVE AIRCRAFT THAT HAD BEEN RESERVED FOR THE UAE WERE RETURNED TO THE USN FLEET, WHERE THEY ARE BEING DISMANTLED FOR SPARE PARTS.

¶A. (C) THE UAE REJECTED THE E-2C LOA DUE (OSTENSIBLY) TO TWO CONCERNS: THE DIFFICULTY AND EXPENSE OF INTEGRATING A FRENCH DATA LINK SYSTEM (STRICTLY A COMMERCIAL VENTURE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND FRENCH MANUFACTURERS, AND THE UAE); AND UAE INSISTENCE UPON BLANKET APPROVAL FOR THE U.S. LINK-16 DATA LINK SYSTEM. THIS LATTER ISSUE IS SIGNIFICANT, IN THAT UAE INTENDS TO INTEGRATE LINK-16 IN A NATIONAL COMMAND AND CONTROL ARCHITECTURE (STILL TO BE DEFINED), WHICH INCLUDES NUMEROUS FOREIGN-MANUFACTURED WEAPONS SYSTEMS. IN TWO SEPARATE DISCUSSIONS WITH MBZ PRIOR TO THE OED, AMBASSADOR WAHBA STRESSED THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS: LINK-16 HAD BEEN APPROVED FOR THE UAE E-2C AND APPROVAL IS PENDING/LIKELY FOR THE F-16; THE U.S. RELEASE PROCESS DOES NOT PERMIT ANY BLANKET APPROVAL PROVISIONS, EVEN FOR OUR CLOSEST ALLIES (UK, NATO); AND THAT THIS ISSUE REMAINS THE PROPER PURVIEW OF THE COMMAND AND CONTROL INTEROPERABILITY BOARD (CCIB), WHICH WE HAVE REPEATEDLY ATTEMPTED TO SCHEDULE AND WHICH UAE CANCELLED ON SHORT NOTICE AT LEAST TWICE. FURTHER, AMBASSADOR WAHBA STRESSED THAT THE AIRCRAFT WOULD NO LONGER BE AVAILABLE AFTER THE OED, AND THAT THE COST TO ACQUIRE THE SAME OR A COMPLIMENTARY SYSTEM IN THE FUTURE WOULD CERTAINLY BE MUCH HIGHER. MBZ ACKNOWLEDGED THE AMBASSADOR'S POINTS AND INFORMED HER THAT, WITHOUT ASSURANCE FOR BLANKET RELEASE, THE DECISION HAD BEEN MADE TO REJECT THE OFFER.

¶B. (C) IN THE MEANTIME, THE AEW CAPABILITY OFFERED IN THE E-2C LOA REMAINS A PRESSING REQUIREMENT FOR THE UAE, AND ONE THEY WILL HAVE TO ADDRESS AT SOME POINT IN THE FUTURE. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THEIR F-16 FLEET WILL CERTAINLY BE DIMINISHED BY THE LOSS OF THE COMPLEMENTING E-2C CAPABILITY, AND EVEN IF THEY BEGIN NEGOTIATION ON ANOTHER AEW PLATFORM TOMORROW--EVEN ANOTHER E-2C PURCHASE--IT WILL PROBABLY BE 3 - 5 YEARS BEFORE THEY CAN OBTAIN THE CAPABILITY THEY REQUIRE. FINALLY, IN TERMS OF THEIR EXPRESSED LINK-16 ISSUE, THE UAE F-16 FLEET IS NOW ISOLATED AS THE ONLY PLATFORM IN THEIR INVENTORY CURRENTLY APPROVED FOR LINK-16 (RELEASE IN PRINCIPLE).

¶24. (C) LINK-16 IS ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL VITAL INTEROPERABILITY ISSUES THAT CHALLENGE OUR FUTURE MILITARY INTERACTION WITH UAE. OTHERS INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: COMSEC ACCOUNTS, FACILITIES, AND CUSTODIANS; LINK-11;

AND DEVELOPMENT OF A VISION FOR A UAE NATIONAL COMMAND AND CONTROL ARCHITECTURE. THESE ISSUES ARE IN THE ARENA OF THE CENTCOM-SPONSORED COMMAND AND CONTROL INTEROPERABILITY BOARD. UNFORTUNATELY, UAE CANCELLED A PREVIOUSLY-SCHEDULED CCIB ON VERY SHORT NOTICE IN OCTOBER 2003, AND HAS FAILED TO RESPOND TO REPEATED CENTCOM AND COUNTRY TEAM OFFERS TO RE-SCHEDULE, MOST RECENTLY IN APRIL 2004. THE CCIB IS ONE OF OUR MOST PRESSING ISSUES AND SHOULD BE STRESSED AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY DURING THE CDR'S VISIT.

¶25. (C) IN FEBRUARY 2004 UAE ANNOUNCED A SURPRISE DECISION TO REJECT THE LOA FOR U.S.-BASED (TUCSON) F-16 TRAINING FOR THEIR SOON-TO-BE-ACQUIRED F-16 BLOCK-60 FLEET. THE UAE AIR FORCE COMMANDER CITED NEW FISCAL CONSTRAINTS AS THE RATIONALE FOR THE DECISION. IN RESPONSE, SAF/IA, LOCKHEED MARTIN, AND GENERAL ELECTRIC RAPIDLY ENGINEERED A REVISED OFFER IN MARCH 2004 THAT LOWERED THE COST OF THE PROGRAM SIGNIFICANTLY, BY REDUCING THE SCOPE AND SCALE (THOUGH NOT THE CALIBER) OF THE TRAINING. UAE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION AND APPRECIATION FOR THE NEW OFFER. SAF/IA PROVIDED THE REVISED LETTER OF OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE (LOA) IN MAY 2004, WHICH WILL EXPIRE ON 30 JUNE 2004. WE HAVE JUST LEARNED THAT UAE IS REQUESTING A TWO MONTH EXTENSION ON THE LOA, WHILE THEY CONCLUDE THEIR DELIBERATIONS ON THE OFFER. IT APPEARS THAT SAF/IA WILL APPROVE THE EXTENSION TO THE OFFER EXPIRATION DATE AS REQUESTED, BUT WILL ALSO REITERATE THE IMPLICATIONS THAT CONTINUED DELAYS IN SIGNING THE CASE WILL ONLY EXACERBATE AN ALREADY CRITICAL SITUATION. IT IS A DAY FOR DAY SLIP IN THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE TRAINING SCHEDULE FOR EVERY DAY OF DELAY BEYOND 30 JUNE IN SIGNING THE CASE. THIS IS A REAL CONCERN, AS SEVERAL KEY PROGRAM MILESTONES ARE IMMINENT OR HAVE ELAPSED.

¶26. (S) CONCURRENT WITH THE INITIAL UAE DECISION TO REJECT THE F-16 TRAINING CASE, WE LEARNED THAT UAE HAD TABLED THEIR DRAFT REQUEST TO ACQUIRE ATACMS/HIMARS. THIS DECISION IS ALSO REPORTEDLY DUE TO THE COST OF THE WEAPON SYSTEM AND WAS CONFIRMED IN A CONVERSATION BETWEEN DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE AND MBZ ON 20 APRIL 2004. MEANWHILE, WE

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HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN A COMMITMENT ON SEVERAL OTHER KEY FMS AND DCS PROGRAMS, INCLUDING THE AH-64 APACHE A-TO-D REMANUFACTURE AND HARPOON. BOTH OF THESE LOAS EXPIRED WITHOUT COMMENT FROM UAE. TAKEN IN CONJUNCTION WITH UAE PROPOSALS FOR SEVERAL OTHER LARGE, PENDING U.S. ACQUISITIONS (SUCH AS SIGINT AIRCRAFT, ENHANCED SEA SPARROW MISSILE, A LAND FORCES COMBAT TRAINING CENTER, AND REMOTE SENSING), WE BELIEVE UAE MAY BE EITHER OVER-EXTENDED IN THEIR DEFENSE BUDGET, OR THEY MAY HAVE REASSESSED THEIR DEFENSE PRIORITIES ENTIRELY. WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO UNDERSTAND UAE'S CURRENT AND FUTURE YEAR DEFENSE PRIORITIES IN ORDER TO ASSIST THEM WITH AN INTEGRATED AND EXECUTABLE ACQUISITION, OPERATIONS, AND MAINTENANCE PLAN. OBTAINING SUCH AN UNDERSTANDING SHOULD BE A KEY CONSIDERATION FOR THE UPCOMING JMC, TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 2004.

¶27. (C) DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO WASHINGTON, 10 - 12 MAY 2004, MBZ RAISED SEVERAL ISSUES THAT WE ARE WORKING TO ADDRESS. DURING A MEETING WITH SECDEF DR. ROCHE AND CSAF GENERAL JUMPER, MBZ ASKED FOR AN UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF LINK-16 RELEASE; EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN POSSIBLY OBTAINING USAF A-10 ATTACK AIRCRAFT; AND REQUESTED AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF USAF F-16 INSTRUCTOR PILOTS (IPS) AND SENIOR MAINTENANCE NCOS OFFERED IN THE F-16 TRAINING LOA (FROM TWO TO EIGHT IPS, AND FROM THREE TO THIRTY FIVE NCOS). IN A SUBSEQUENT MEETING WITH SECDEF, MBZ ALSO ASKED FOR AN UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF THE UAE REQUEST TO OBTAIN PREDATOR UAVS, AND REQUESTED AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF UAE SLOTS AT NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY, FROM ONE TO TWO. SAF/IA WILL LEAD A TEAM TO ABU DHABI TO BRIEF MBZ ON LINK-16, A-10S, F-16 SUPPORT PERSONNEL, AND PREDATOR, ON 26 JUNE 2004. OSD (P) IS STAFFING A RESPONSE TO INCREASE THE NDU AUTHORIZATIONS, AND WE ANTICIPATE AN ANSWER ON THAT ISSUE AT ANY TIME.

¶28. (S) UAE STRONGLY DESIRES U.S. SUPPORT FOR REMOTE SENSING DATA, SYSTEMS, AND PRODUCTS. THEY HAVE REQUESTED A

DEDICATED TURNKEY COMMERCIAL REMOTE SENSING SATELLITE SYSTEM, WITH AN OPTION TO LEASE. WITH THE PURCHASE OF F-16 BLOCK-60S, UAE PARTICULARLY WANTS TO ENSURE COMPATIBILITY FOR MISSION PLANNING AND INTELLIGENCE INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT. SPECIFICALLY, THEY HAVE REQUESTED A SYSTEM WITH PANCHROMATIC, MULTISPECTRAL, AND SYNTHETIC APERTURE RADAR CAPABILITIES. PANCHROMATIC AND MULTISPECTRAL OPTIONS ARE INCLUDED IN THE CURRENT INTERAGENCY-APPROVED NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK; SAR IS NOT. STATE/NON-PROLIFERATION LED INTERAGENCY DISCUSSIONS WITH UAE IN SEPTEMBER 2003 TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE. THE INTERAGENCY TEAM IS NOW CONSIDERING OPTIONS THAT MAY BE OFFERED IN SUPPORT OF THE UAE REQUEST, INCLUDING COMPETITIVE COMMERCIAL APPLICATIONS, AND WE ARE AWAITING GUIDANCE.

129. (S) UAE DIRECTORATE OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE (DMI) SUBMITTED A FORMAL LETTER OF REQUEST (1 MAY 2003) TO PURCHASE TWO ELECTRONIC WARFARE (EW) AIRCRAFT (PROGRAM ENTITLED CANDY APPLE). TO DATE, THE UAE REQUEST REMAINS IN THE INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AND RELEASE PROCESSES, AND OUR INDICATIONS ARE THAT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT UAE WILL RECEIVE APPROVAL FOR THE SYSTEM THEY REQUESTED. UAE IS ANXIOUS TO PURSUE OFFERED FOREIGN ALTERNATIVES SHOULD AN EVENTUAL U.S. RESPONSE BE UNFAVORABLE. WE RECENTLY LEARNED THAT THEY HAVE TRANSFERRED ONE OF THEIR BOEING 737 AIRCRAFT FROM EMIRI FLIGHT (DV SUPPORT) TO DMI, AND MAY BE IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE FRENCH FIRM THALES TO CONVERT THE AIRCRAFT TO A SIGINT PLATFORM.

130. (C) ON 20 APRIL 2004 DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE ASKED MBZ IF UAE WAS STILL INTERESTED IN ATACMS. MBZ REPLIED "YES, BUT WE ARE CONCERNED WITH THE COST," AND THAT ENDED THE DISCUSSION. WE ARE AWARE THAT THE UAE RECENTLY TABLED A DRAFT LETTER OF REQUEST TO PURCHASE ATACMS, DUE TO THE COST OF THE WEAPON SYSTEM. MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, UAE HAS NOT SIGNED THE ATACMS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU), BUT HAS FORMALLY OFFERED SEVERAL "SUGGESTIONS" FOR CHANGES. MOST OF THESE SUGGESTIONS WOULD PROPERLY BE RESOLVED IN ANY EVENTUAL LOA AND ARE IRRELEVANT TO THE MOU. HOWEVER, ON THE ISSUES OF MISSILE ACCOUNTABILITY AND PHYSICAL INVENTORY, THE UAE IS FIRMLY OPPOSED TO U.S. REQUIREMENTS FOR END USE MONITORING AND HAS REJECTED THE PRINCIPLE OUTRIGHT. THIS POSITION WOULD REQUIRE THE RENEGOTIATION OF THE MOU TO REMOVE THE END USE MONITORING PROVISIONS, AND THIS IS NOT LIKELY. WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO EXPLAIN THE U.S. POLICY IN THE FOLLOWING TERMS: THIS WEAPON SYSTEM IS AMONG OUR MOST SENSITIVE TECHNOLOGIES AND WE ARE ASKING THAT THE UAE PROVIDE ASSURANCE THEY WILL PROTECT THE INHERENT TECHNOLOGY JUST AS WE DO; THE ACCOUNTABILITY PROVISIONS OF THE POLICY ARE NO DIFFERENT THAN THOSE WE APPLY TO OUR OWN FORCES; THE UAE HAS NOT BEEN SINGLED-OUT FOR ANY UNIQUE PROVISIONS AND THE POLICY APPLIES TO ALL OF OUR PARTNERS WHO PURCHASE SUCH TECHNOLOGY; AND, THE INVENTORY REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT AS OBTRUSIVE AS THE UAE MIGHT FEAR. UNFORTUNATELY, WE REMAIN AT AN IMPASSE.

131. (C) WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED A NEAR IDENTICAL PROBLEM OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTROL ASSURANCES FOR A PROPOSED DIRECT COMMERCIAL SALE OF NIGHT VISION DEVICES (NVDS), DUE TO A RECENT CHANGE IN U.S. EXPORT POLICY. THE EMIRATIS, ESPECIALLY LAND FORCES COMMANDER MAJ GEN SAEED MOHAMMED AL RUMAITHY, HAVE VEHEMENTLY REJECTED ANY PROVISIONS THAT WOULD PERMIT US TO INVENTORY THEIR NVDS AFTER THE SALE. HE CITES THE FACT THAT UAE ALREADY POSSESSES THE EXACT SAME NVDS UNDER A PREVIOUS SALE, WITH NO REQUIREMENT FOR INVENTORY AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

132. (U) THE EMIRATIS REMAIN VERY CONCERNED BY CHANGES IN U.S. VISA POLICIES SINCE 2001 AND HAVE FREQUENTLY VOICED THEIR CONCERNS IN SENIOR-LEVEL MILITARY FORUMS. INCREASED U.S. SECURITY MEASURES AND BACKGROUND CHECKS ARE INTIMIDATING AND CONFUSING TO THE EMIRATIS. DESPITE OUR BEST EFFORTS, THEY CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN DENIED BONA FIDE MILITARY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES, AND THEN ASSESSED HUGE FMS MISSED-TRAINING PENALTY FEES, WHILE VISA APPLICATIONS WERE EITHER DENIED OUTRIGHT OR HELD UP IN OUR SEEMINGLY INSCRUTABLE PROCESS. THIS IS NOT THE CASE. IN FACT, IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE EMIRATIS HAVE ONLY BEEN PENALIZED FOR MISSED TRAINING ON TWO OCCASIONS. IN ONE

CASE THEY DID NOT PROVIDE A CANDIDATE FOR A RESERVED MILITARY TRAINING COURSE AND THEN FAILED TO CANCEL THE COURSE; AND IN THE SECOND CASE THEIR CANDIDATE APPLIED FOR HIS VISA LESS THAN A WEEK PRIOR TO THE TRAINING, AND DID NOT RECEIVE THE VISA IN TIME TO ATTEND THE COURSE. TOTAL PENALTY FEES FOR BOTH CASES WERE LESS THAN \$40K. WE HAVE WORKED HARD TO ADDRESS EMIRATI CONCERNS REGARDING THE LENGTH OF TIME AND THE UNCERTAINTY OF OBTAINING A U.S. VISA. WE HAVE REASSURED THEM OF BOTH THE LEGITIMATE U.S. HOMELAND SECURITY ISSUES AND THE VALUE OF THEIR TRAVEL TO THE U.S. TO ATTEND MILITARY TRAINING AND CONFERENCES. WE HAVE IMPLEMENTED A SYSTEM TO IDENTIFY THEIR TRAVEL CANDIDATES EARLY, SCREEN THEIR APPLICATIONS AND WALK THEM THROUGH THE CONSULAR PROCESS, AND WILL UNILATERALLY CANCEL SCHEDULED TRAINING AT OR PRIOR TO THE PENALTY DATE IF THERE IS NO QUALIFIED, READY-TO-TRAVEL CANDIDATE. WE HAVE BEEN LARGELY SUCCESSFUL IN THIS EFFORT. OUR GREATEST CHALLENGE NOW IS THE LINGERING "URBAN LEGEND" THAT A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF VISA APPLICATIONS ARE REFUSED AND AN APPARENT CULTURAL STIGMA THAT FAILURE TO OBTAIN A U.S. VISA DISHONORS THE INTEGRITY OF THE APPLICANT.

133. (C) IN SUMMARY, WHILE WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED SOME SETBACKS IN MANY MAJOR WEAPONS SALES, OUR MIL-TO-MIL RELATIONSHIP REMAINS STRONG. A FULL DISCUSSION OF UAE SECURITY CONCERNS AND PRIORITIES WILL PROVIDE US WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO REFINE AND BETTER UNDERSTAND THE FUTURE OF OUR IMPORTANT, STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP.

WAHBA